until all the insects are swimming around on the top. Then he scoops them up with his hands, squeezes out the water and dries them over the fire until the edible ones can be separated from the rest. The pure "Hottentot rice," *!gîbes, obtained in this manner, has already been slightly roasted while drying over the fire and is usually eaten without anything added. 222 252

I have often seen the insects eaten alive while being collected. While the old man fishes out the insects from the dark muddy water, the children squat around and put in their mouths anything that is crawling about. I found the animals without taste when eaten alive but when roasted they taste very good.

One dish, that cannot be depended upon every year, but which is very hearty when offered, is migratory locusts. Wherever a swarm has landed, it covers the ground and loads (!ga/e) the bushes by the thousands. Therefore the Hottentot calls the insects that sit on the branches *!ga/e‿hu/ms. Among these, the females loaded with eggs, *!kx̃u/i‿hu/mti, are the most in demand. When they have retired to their nocturnal quarters after the day's work, which consists of egg-laying, and hang massed together on the branches, the Hottentot sets fire to the bush. It flares up all over. The next morning the ashes are swept up with branches, gathered up in skins and spread out on large flat rocks. The insects with eggs are sorted out. The others are only collected if there are not enough of the ones with eggs. The collected insects are put in sacks and brought to the huts on oxen. [262] 222

[192] There the mass is spread out, women sit in a circle around it and pulverize it with stones. When it is prepared, the soft light-brown mass is loaded into skin sacks and stored. When stirred up with milk it is supposed to be better tasting than when raw. 252 [262]

Although a swarm of locusts is a terrible plague, often destroying pasture lands, still locust burning time is a festival, at least for the young people. When the area of the locust plague is far away, the young people are released from the watchfulness of the old people, who stay home near the huts, and they now enjoy unrestrained freedom, particularly in the sexual sense. 786 731 [834]

The superabundance of food allows communistic principles, always a living force among the Hottentots, to be practiced without restrictions. A person who has gathered locusts may not prevent another from eating them. Even a gesture of refusal is despised. Whoever violates of this custom, will, according to their belief, be punished by becoming sick from the locust meal. However bestial a meal of 262 576 [753] 262

6: Hoernlé E-5 (1912-1913)1923
FX13 Hottentot FX13
Nama



# THE EXPRESSION OF THE SOCIAL VALUE OF WATER AMONG THE NAMAN OF SOUTH-WEST AFRICA.

BY

MRS. R. F. A. HOERNLÉ, B.A. (*née* MISS A. W. TUCKER).

*Read July 13, 1923.*

312 231 It seems hardly necessary to emphasise, before a South African audience, the importance of water in a country like South-West Africa, the home of the Naman. They are a pastoral people, to whom "God gave cattle as their grass," as one of them put it to me, so that a good supply of fodder and water are the two essentials of their existence. Grass is often easier to find than water.

133 132 231 When Moffat, over a hundred years ago, inquired of a traveller in South-West Africa what the country was like to which he was journeying he was told: "Sir, you will find plenty of sand and stones, a thinly scattered population always suffering from want of water, on plains and hills roasted like a burnt loaf, under the scorching rays of a cloudless sky." That is a pretty good description of the country in the south which is the home of the Naman, in its normal condition, yet it only wants a few regular showers of rain to convert it into a veritable sea of grass, such as it is now after the wonderful season of rain that is just finished there. Grass there is enough for animals, wild and tame, for at least three years to come, yet long before that time much of it will have become inaccessible, or would have done under primitive conditions, because it will be too far removed from the nearest available water. Ten years ago, when I was travelling through the Richtersveld in a season of great drought, we came upon secluded spots where there was grass in plenty, which was still nourishing enough in spite of the fact that it was dry, yet the natives were creeping miserably along the rugged banks of the Orange, feeding their animals on the quick grass at the edge, for they did not dare to move away from the precious water. This sort of experience makes one realise vividly that it is water which must be the first thought in planning any settlement, or in deciding on any trek, and the quantity of water available will determine the numbers which can settle at any one spot and the length of time during which they can stay there.

312 361 731

---

NOTE.—It has not been possible to indicate the tone of the Hottentot words in all cases where it was necessary, owing to typographical difficulties. Also, it was not possible to indicate a nasalised *n* for the same reason.